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## **Mummies: New Secrets from the Tombs**

Using modern technology to unravel ancient mysteries, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County mounted Thursday the world premiere of *Mummies: New Secrets from the Tombs*.

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas joined NHM president Dr. Jane Pisano in opening the museum's newly renovated gallery to exhibit one of the largest collections of mummies in North America, many on display for the first time.

"Giving visitors a chance to explore rare and ancient Egyptian and Peruvian mummies reflects the educational mission of the museum, which the county is so proud to support," he said.

"Exhibits such as these can and do have a huge impact on visitors, especially young Angelenos who may be inspired to pursue science and a lifelong love of learning," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas added.

On loan from The Field Museum in Chicago, the exhibition will open to the general public Sept. 18 through Jan. 8. It consists of 19 mummies, including one of the oldest in the world, excavated from pre-dynastic through Roman-era Egypt and pre-Incan Peru.

Dr. Pisano said NHM "couldn't be prouder to be the first institution in the country to share these mummies, many of them tucked safely away in vaults for over a century."

"What is really extraordinary about this exhibit is that it will allow visitors to investigate the mummies with new technology, revealing how ancient peoples ingeniously prepared their loved

ones for the journey into the afterlife – but also, and more exciting, their daily lives, beliefs, and rituals,” she added.

Using CAT scans and other noninvasive techniques, scientists and curators were able to virtually unwrap the fragile mummies and make 3D printed casts of the skulls, bones and artifacts inside, leading to new discoveries.

“Hidden away for centuries, these alluring and mysterious mummies can now be experienced in depth in a scientific, cultural and highly personal context,” said Richard Laviere, president and CEO of The Field Museum.

Replica skulls of specimens dubbed “The Gilded Lady” and “Minirdis” were subjected to forensic facial reconstruction, giving visitors a chance to gaze at the face of a middle-aged woman and a teenage boy born thousands of years ago.

Also on display were archaeological treasures such as sarcophagus fragments, canopic jars with preserved organs, animal mummies — including one of a small crocodile — and pottery for bringing food and beer into the afterlife.

*Mummies: New Secrets from the Tombs* will travel to other museums and science centers throughout the country before returning to The Field Museum in Chicago in 2018.

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